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PUBLIC LANDS.

"I have received from the Governor of Arkansas, a copy of a preamble and resolutions, adopted by the Legislature of that State on the subject of the disposition of the lands of the United States within her limits. This document was transmitted to me by the Executive of Arkansas in compliance with one of the resolutions, by which he was directed "to furnish the Executives of all the States of this Union with a copy of the preamble and resolutions, and request them to lay the same before their respective Legislatures."

As well from the proper respect for the wishes of the Legislature of Arkansas, as from a sense of the vast magnitude and importance of the questions presented in them, I now lay before you the preamble and resolutions, and earnestly invite your attention to the subject.

After the most careful consideration, I am not able to divest myself of the opinion, that such a disposition of the public lands as the preamble and resolutions contemplate, would be inconsistent with an enlarged wisdom and enlightened policy and incompatible with the just authority of Congress. The disposition of the public domain desired by Arkansas, upon principles which apply with equal force to all the States in which public lands are situated, goes to the extent of conferring upon each of these States "the entire right to, and the exclusive control over all the lands claimed by the Government of the United States which are within their borders." The Legislature of Arkansas have instructed their Senators and requested their Representatives "to support, and if necessary, to bring forward in Congress, and to spare no pains to effect the passage of a bill" for the accomplishment of these objects.

I entertain a solemn conviction that the adoption of such a measure by Congress, would be fraught with great mischief to the tranquillity of the Union, be productive of much injury to the prosperity and interests of this Commonwealth, as well as of all the other States having no public lands within their limits—involve a sacrifice of the rights reserved in their acts of cession by Virginia, New York, North Carolina, Georgia, and other States, and constitute a breach of the terms on which the trust was confided to Congress of disposing of the public lands. I deem it my duty, therefore, to call your particular attention to the extent of the claims now made on behalf of the States where the public lands lie, and to recommend to you the adoption of such means as you may consider best, for interposing the authority and influence of this State to prevent the success of the measures contemplated.

The policy heretofore pursued in regard to the public lands, has been sufficiently liberal. Under its operation, the new States formed out of this Territory, have multiplied, grown and prospered in wealth, population and power, to an extent unexampled in the history of the world. The abundance and cheapness of that rich domain have invited a continued emigration, which, while it furnished an industrious, hardy, and enterprising population to the new States, has been a perpetual drain upon the resources and prosperity of the older States of the Union. While the new States have filled up with astonishing rapidity, many of those on the Atlantic, have been, if not decreasing in population, agricultural improvement, and wealth, either stationary, or making very inconsiderable advancement.

The land system of the United States, as established at an early period by the general laws for surveying the lands, offering them for sale at public auction, and allowing such as were not sold at public sale, to be entered at a minimum price, was adopted after great deliberation, with a sagacious foresight and just regard to the interest of the old as well as of the new States. It opened competition in the purchase of the choice lands to the citizens of all the States. It prohibited, under severe penalties, the settlement and occupation of the public lands, by persons intruding upon them without title, and in derogation of the rights of the public. It was calculated in theory to secure a fair and sufficient price for all the lands offered for sale according to its different grades of value; and by providing the means of limiting the quantity that was surveyed and thrown into the market, tended to prevent that depreciating of the value of landed property which is the inevitable consequence of increasing the quantity for sale beyond the demand. The system, in fact, regarded the public lands as the common property of the people of all the States—as a common fund to be applied to the common benefit of all, and having been acquired and preserved by their united exertions and valor, or paid for out of the common treasury, so to be disposed of, as would best promote the common interest of all. It cannot be disguised, however, that from some cause or other, we have been disappointed in the success of many of the objects of that wise, liberal, and equal system—that from time to time inroads on, and departures from, the policy of the system have been made—that for many years past it seems to have been the desire of the Government to bring into the market almost unlimited quantities of the public lands, so much so, that we are informed by a report from the commissioner of the General Land Office in Washington, that there remained unsold and subject to private entry on the 30th of Sept. 1837, upwards of eighty-eight millions of acres, notwithstanding the immense sales of 1835 and 1836, amounting to near forty millions of acres. The consequence of this has been, the vast quantities of the public domain, as fertile as any in our rich western country, and much of it worth from five to fifty dollars an acre, as soon as it is entered, have realized to the Government a price merely nominal compared with the real value. We know, too, that within the last ten years, successive acts have been pa[illegible] d- s [illegible] those who settled upon and occupied va. [illegible]

the public land before it was surveyed, and thrown open to the competition of the people generally, thus rewarding instead of punishing those who had violated the law, by intruding upon the public property; and, besides all this, vast bodies of the public lands have been gratuitously bestowed upon the new States for purposes of education, internal improvement, and other objects, exclusively beneficial to those States.

The inevitable tendency of this new policy has been to enhance the prosperity of the States where the lands are situated, at the expense of the old States—to give an unnatural and artificial impetus to emigration from the old to the new States, having the effect of a system of bounties on emigration, producing a constant drain of our population, who carry with them their wealth and their labor, and causing a general depreciation of our landed property, by throwing into the market, at inadequate prices, immense quantities of fresher and more fertile lands in these new States.

As another consequence, the public treasury has realized little more, on the aggregate of all the lands sold, than the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre; and that fact (the consequence of the thriftless and wasteful policy which has been pursued,) is now earnestly and perpetually urged as a reason why the price should be still further diminished—that the public lands should cease to be regarded as a source of revenue, and should, in effect, be surrendered to the States in which the lands lie by a system of settlement rights, pre-emption laws, and graduation bills. So far from this, results such as these ought to induce an inquiry whether the system does not need reformation. If they are to be traced to the private combinations and associations of settlers or speculators, which put down competition, these combinations and associations ought to be prohibited and punished; if the quantity of land surveyed and brought into market, is too large, let no more be offered until there is a nearer equality between the supply and demand; if it be that the pre-emption system furnishes the choice lands at the minimum price, such legislation ought to cease and the laws prohibiting intrusion, and requiring the removal of intruders, ought to be rigidly enforced—and if the evil is too inveterate for correction by any of these reforms, let the minimum price of the land be raised.

This subject is one in which those States, and especially Virginia, by whose cessions to the United States, much the largest portion of the public lands were obtained, except what were acquired under the Louisiana treaty and the purchase of Florida, ought to feel a deep and lively interest and have, in some sort, a peculiar right to interfere. At the close of the Revolutionary War, the whole of the domain, now comprising the States of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and the Territory of Wisconsin, were within the chartered limits of, and claimed by, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. To that vast region, the Northwestern Territory, Virginia had a double claim of chartered title and right of conquest; for she acquired the actual possession of so much of it as had been trod by the foot of the white man, by conquest with her own troops, receiving no assistance in that quarter from the other States during the Revolutionary War. And it may not be out of place to remark, that many of the gallant officers and soldiers who achieved this arduous conquest, have not yet received the Bounty Lands which were promised them by Virginia for this service—even at this moment, while projects are on foot for the surrender to the States in which they lie, of the very lands acquired by their hardy valor, and out of which these engagements were to be satisfied.

The States which I mentioned as claiming these lands, yielding to the natural apprehensions and jealousies of some of the other States of the Confederacy, and preferring harmony, union and liberty, to power, agreed to settle their own conflicting claims, and to quiet all fears and complaints, by ceding to the United States all these lands. But while making this concession to harmony and union, they accompanied the surrender with conditions and reservations, contained in the Acts of Session, which were accepted by Congress, and to the observance of which the United States Government is bound by the highest obligations of public faith; and for the performance of which, so far as Virginia is concerned, the Congress of the Confederacy, whose obligations, in this respect, have devolved upon the Government of the Union, expressly engaged by the Ordinance of 1787, which has ever since been regarded as a solemn national compact.

After devoting the public lands to the payment of the National Debt, created by the Revolutionary War, and to the reimbursement of the expenses of Virginia in defending the territory ceded the acts of cession by Virginia, and those of the other States, substantially provided, "that the lands ceded should be considered a common fund for the benefit of such of the United States as have become, or shall become, members of the Confederacy or Federal alliance of the said States, Virginia, inclusive, according to their usual respective proportions in the general charge and expenditure, and shall be faithfully and bona fide disposed of for that purpose, and for no other use or purpose whatsoever."

Here is an explicit stipulation, incorporated in the very grant to the United States, accepted and ratified by the Ordinance referred to, by which these public lands were to be held as *a common fund* for the benefit of all the States, and *if not faithfully and bona fide disposed of for that purpose, and for no other purpose whatsoever*, the solemn engagements of the United States will be violated—the condition on which alone Virginia and the other States agreed to relinquish their title, would be broken, and a manifest breach of the trust confided to the Congress of the Union, committed. A more flagrant case of such violation could not be imagined.

So far from acquiescing in such disposition of the public lands, I think, that a proper compliance with both the letter and spirit of the grants by which the disposal of them was entrusted to the United States, requires, that such appropriations of them, or of the proceeds of their sales, should be made to the other States, as would place them upon an equal footing with the States in whose favor donations have been already made.

It is matter of history that Congress has, from time to time, appropriated to the new States and Territories in which the public lands are situated, a very large proportion, believed to be one thirty-sixth part of the whole, for purposes of education. Besides this, very large quantities have been bestowed for objects of internal improvement within these States. The aggregate amount of these appropriations cannot fall short of ten millions of acres, and probably far exceed it. Why ought not an appropriation of an equal quantity, or its proceeds, be made to the other States in proportions graduated upon some equitable ratio of distribution, and to be used by them at their own discretion for purposes of education, internal improvement, or in whatever way they might deem proper? It may confidently be asked, how can the Government of the United States, as a faithful trustee, acquit itself of the duty of making an equal, impartial, and faithful administration of this *common fund* until the application of it to the benefit of all the States, according to their usual respective proportions in the general charges and expenditures, is realized? This can never be done by sacrificing this rich inheritance for an inadequate price. It cannot be done by partial and exclusive privileges conferred on particular States or their citizens.—It cannot be done by making a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, upon any terms no matter how equal, until compensation has been provided for the unequal and partial distribution already made—and especially, it cannot *be done*, by making a systematic distribution, upon terms wholly unequal, which would perpetuate and increase the injustice and inequality already perpetrated.

Having thus freely and candidly expressed my views on this subject, obviously one of great and growing importance and urgency, I shall leave it to be disposed of as the Legislature, in their wisdom, think best. I know no matter in regard to which this Commonwealth has, and ought to feel a deeper interest. There is no State which can have a better right to take the lead in urging upon the Congress of the United States, the force of the reservations contained in the acts of cession, and the binding obligation in its true spirit, or of the ordinance of 1787, by which the cessions were accepted, and the faith of the Union bound to comply with their stipulations and conditions.

I also lay before you resolutions of the General Assembly of Connecticut, "relating to the disposition of the public lands of the United States," in which the same view of this important subject is taken, which I endeavored to present.

DAVID CAMPBELL.

Executive Department, Jan. 7th, 1839.

NOVEL READING.

From Dr. Humphrey's "Thoughts on Education," in the New York Observer:

Absolutely to proscribe *all* fiction, would, perhaps, be going too far. I think I could select a dozen volumes, besides Robinson Crusoe, which I should be willing to have my children read in their minority. But nothing is more to be deprecated, in a family, than a morbid appetite for novels; and all experience proves, how difficult it is, to keep it from becoming absolutely *ravenous*, if it is indulged at all. Reading one work of fiction, is almost certain to create in the young and susceptible mind, a more eager demand for another; and the demand rises at every step of the progress, till it is prepared to break over all bounds, and to devour whatever comes in its way, however it may inflame the passions, pollute the imagination, or corrupt the heart. One grand objection against putting popular works of fiction into the hands of our youth of both sexes is, that the world of romance, differs so entirely from the rough, stormy, and matter-of-fact world, in which they are to live and be *happy*, if they can; and certainly to suffer, whatever pains they may take to shun it. Suppose your blooming daughter, of fifteen, could be transported into some paradise of perpetual spring and spicy breezes—of odoriferous flowers, and feathered harmony, and gushing marble fountains and banyan shades, and everlasting sunshine—what kind of preparation would she be making in such bowers of unmingled delights, for returning, at the end of five or ten years, to spend her life in this cold region where she was born, upon which the curse of God has so heavily fallen? But far worse than this must it be for her to dwell the same number of years in the fairy lands of romance, and then come down to the dull, husky prose and discordant elements—the thousand inconveniences and cares and toils and disappointments of real life. When the novelist can plant and water and illuminate some terrestrial paradise; and shut out sorrow and pain and sin; and give our children a life-lease of it, it will be time enough to introduce them to his acquaintance; but till then, the less they have to do with this class of writers the better.

American Farmers.—There is one class of men on whom we can as yet rely. It is the same class that stood on the little green at Lexington; that gathered on the heights of Bunker Hill, and poured down from the hills of New England, and which were the life-blood of the nation when the English Lion was ready to devour it. I mean the farmers. They were never found trampling on law and right; were I to commit my character to any class of men; my family, and my country's safety, it would be the farmers. They are a class of men such as the world never saw for honesty, intelligence, and Roman virtue; sweetened by the Gospel of God. And when this nation quakes, they and their sons are those that will stand by the sheet anchors of our liberties, and hold the ship at her moorings till she outrides the storm.—*Tenn. W. Review.*

The British Navy.—In looking over our file of late English papers, we notice that the British navy is to be *increased* by the addition of 10,000 seamen and 1,000 boys. Rendezvous for their enlistment were being opened at all the seaport towns in Ireland. This reminds us of admiral Collingwood's request to the British admiralty, "to send me (him) in all the ships that come out, a number of Irish lads from 12 to 16 years old. One hundred that joined the fleet twelve months since, are now good topmen." This plan we have urged as a means to supply our navy with active and intelligent native seamen.—*Phila. U. S. Gaz.*

Wisconsin Lead.—Governor Dodge in his message says upwards of ten millions of pounds of lead, are sent east annually from the mines of Wisconsin. It now goes by the way of New Orleans to New York, but from the internal improvements now going on, in two years it will pass through the lakes and down the Erie Canal.

FROM FISK'S TRAVELS IN EUROPE.

THE MEDITERRANEAN.

An intense interest was excited in my own mind when I first caught a glimpse, from the gorge of the mountains of the Mediterranean. "The sea! the sea!" I vociferated, as my eyes for the first time lighted on those classic waters. Oh! what is there of interest to man—what is there of science, of literature, of art, history, of religion, that is not associated with the waves and the shores of the Mediterranean sea! From the Pillars of Hercules, round every bay and gulf, and subordinate sea, in all the sinuosities of the indented coast, to the Pillars of Hercules again, there is not a league in the distance which has not its classic associations. The trough of the Mediterranean is the centre of the world; and on its shores, or in their neighborhood, all the great transactions of the world's drama have been beheld. Not far from this, man was first created—and here too he was redeemed. The patriarchs, some of them at least, saw these waters, and on their eastern boundaries, the tribes of Isreal had their inheritance. Here literature was cradled; and the arts were not only born here, but here they were matured and perfected. On this inland ocean, navigation was so advanced, and the mariner so trained, as prepared the way and prompted to the effort to traverse the Atlantic and find a new hemisphere. As the waves break at my feet, I fancy that it may be the same billow that laved the sides of the ship Argo, in which Jason sailed for the golden fleece; or one which had kissed the ship of Cadmus, while he was conveying the alphabet to Greece; or perhaps it is the treacherous surge that broke over the ship of Palinurus, and washed him into the sea; or, if none of these, it may have danced beside the ship of the Apostle Paul in his Passage to Rome.

What has not the Mediterranean beheld? She is the chronicle of the world, and on her shores the history of the nations is recorded. Egypt and Carthage, Tyre and Sidon, Greece and Rome, all, all have had their day and printed their indelible history on these shores. Even Jerusalem, the city of the great king, could almost look from the heights of Zion into the "Great Sea." Here too, is the birth place of republicanism, where those models of government and principles of jurisprudence were advanced which have been the admiration and study of all succeeding ages.

But what is the Mediterranean now? In point of literature and science, a far brighter light shines upon other parts of Europe and America, than shines on any part of those lands, which once enjoyed the only spots of sunshine on the face of the earth. In a great part, indeed, semi-barbarism prevails: such is Africa on the South, such is Asia on the East, and Turkey on the North. What can we find of civil liberty on the Mediterranean coast? Nothing worthy of the name. There are the seven specks of Islands called the Ionian Republic, besides which there is nothing, I believe, that bears the name of republicanism in the entire length and bredth of the Mediterranean coasts. Two thirds of the coast is under a depotism; not one fourth of it has even a constitutional Government; and not one league of its entire shore, enjoys in the true import of the term civil liberty. And what shall we say of Religion? This is the region where the gospel was first proclaimed; wafted on these seas, it spread over the islands and along the coast in every direction, and yet, now, alas! "how is the gold changed, and the most fine gold become dim!" With the exception of a little sprinkling of the Greek church in Greece, and part of Turkey and Asia Minor, there is nothing to be found but Mahommedanism and Romanism. All the southern and eastern, and part of the northern coasts, are under the undisputed sway of the false prophet; and Italy, France, and Spain, are either infidel or catholic. The beast of Apocalypse, it is said, rose up "out of the sea." How literally has that been fulfiled! How fatally to the interest of the church!

Such being a brief outline of the past and present, the Mediterranean affords a picture to the man of literature and science, to the Republican and the protestant Christian, of melancholy interest.

RECENT ANECDOTE.—By the rules of the University at Glasgow, the students must attend in the College Chapel for divine worship on each Sabbath day. The students there, as in every institution of the kind, were of all ranks, as it regarded respectability and principle. Some drank deep into infidelity, and these, viewing religious worship as the nugœ of the age and a loathsome, contemptible thing, often found means—after answering to their names at roll call—to escape from the intolerable penance of religious services.

One Sabbath day, Mr. B. and Mr. C. had already eloped, and getting to the college gate were contemplating the most pleasant way of killing a Sabbath day, when Mr. A., a nobleman's son and two others of the same infidel principles, having also escaped, saluted them with—

"How shall we spend the day?—Let us hasten from this spot, or we will be clapt up again with these psalm-singers, to growl lulluba or whine like Bedlamites, till our heads are turned. Whither shall we direct our course?"

Mr. C. proposed that they should go and hear Dr. Chalmers preach.

Chalmers? Chalmers!" said Mr. A., the crazy man, whom the mobile vulgus run after? Why he is a mad fanatic, runs seeking for the little mouthed popularity of weak minds. Poh! go and hear a religious fool or knave, or perhaps both! No, no let us go to the green and get a stroll and a laugh at the high dressed weaver girls who will be there on a Sabbath morning. Let me tell you, my hearties," added this youth, "the sound of the classic Clyde is worth all the preachments of a bushel of Dr. Chalmers! And its beautiful banks have something so romantic, that I never go but I immediately wish to write poetry. Come, chums, let us on."

"But Mr. A.," said C., "have you ever heard Dr. Chalmers?"

"Never," was the reply. "but so much is said about him, I believe he is mad They tell such ridiculous things about him, I would laugh all the time, if I were hearing him, by thinking of their fanaticisms! Come, let us go to the green, or to the country, or any where provided only it be away from these superstitious groanings." This he spoke mimicking the usual sectarian twang.

"We may find as much amusement, nevertheless," rejoined C., "as in going into the country Besides, my friend, let us condemn no man unheard. And be it known to you, my comrades, that Dr. Chalmers stands as high as a scholar as he does as a preacher. He is reported to be a profound mathematician, versed in all science, and withal really eloquent. Let us hear him ourselves —and then for a laugh, a cry, or a gest, ad libitum."

The party ultimately agreed to go and hear Dr. Chalmers preach. On arriving at his church, they found it crowded within, and a great multitude standing without. Our students, however, elbowed on, and just got within the door, when they heard Dr. Chalmers announce this text, with peculiar emphasis—"*I am not mad, most noble Festus.*" This passage, so unexpected, and rendered so striking to their minds by their former conversations, arrested their attention.

They heard the conduct of Jesus Christ and his most zealous Apostle, powerfully delineated; the opposition, contempt, and sneers of the ungodly and profane, which they had to suffer, when laboring and striving to promote the holy cause of God, and the salvation of the souls of perishing sinners. The appeals which were afterwards made by the preacher to the consciences of his hearers were irresistible. Amidst the weeping concourse, the hearts of our students were completely melted down. Their conduct appeared to them black and hell-deserving.

Stung with remorse, they withdrew at the close of the public worship, and retired to pray. They hastened to church in the afternoon, to unite in public worship. They became penitent. They were converted, and became members of the visible church of God, hoping and preparing for a better inheritance in the church triumphant.

The above is no fiction. The circumstances were well known, and commonly reported, when the writer was at Glasgow College, a few years ago.

THE MIND BEYOND THE GRAVE.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

"We cannot but feel that we are beings of a two-fold nature—that our journey to the tomb is short, and the existence beyond is immortality. Is there any attainment that we may reserve, when we lay down the body? We know that, of the gold which perishes, we may take none with us when dust returneth to dust. Of the treasures which the mind accumulates, may we carry aught with us, to that bourne, whence no traveller returns?

"We may have been delighted with the studies of nature, and penetrated into those caverns where she perfects her chemistry in secret. Composing and recomposing—changing matter into nameless forms—pursuing the subtlest essences through the air, and resolving even that air into its original elements—what will be the gain, when we pass from material to immaterial, and this great museum and laboratory, the time-worn earth, shall dissolve in its own central fires?

"We may have become adepts in the physiology of man, scanning the mechanism of the eye, till light itself unfolded its invisible laws—of the ear, till its most hidden reticulations confessed their mysterious agency with sound—of the heart, till that citadel of life revealed its hermit policy—but will these researches be available, in a state of being which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived?'

"Will he who fathoms the water, and computes its pressure and power, have need of this skill, 'where there is no more sea?' Will the mathematician exercise the lore, by which he measured the heavens—or the astronomer, the science by which he discovered the stars, when called to go beyond their light?

"Those who have penetrated most deeply into the intellectual structure of man, lifted the curtain from the birth-place of thought, traced the springs of action to their fountain, and thrown the veiled shrinking motive into the crucible, perceive the object of their study, taking a new form, enter disembodied an unknown state of existence, and receiving powers adapted to its laws and modes of intercourse.

"We have no proof that the sciences, to which years of labor have been devoted, will survive the tomb. But the impressions they have made—the dispositions they have nurtured—the good or evil they have helped to stamp upon the soul—will go with it into eternity. The adoring awe, the deep humility, inspired by the study of the planets and their laws—the love of truth, which he cherished who pursued the science that demonstrates it—will find a response among archangels. The praise that was learned amid the melodies of nature—or from the lyre of consecrated genius—may pour the perfected tones from a seraph's harp. The goodness taught in the whole frame of creation, by the flower lifting its honey cup to the insect, and the leaf drawing its green curtain around the nursing chamber of the smallest bird—by the pure stream, refreshing both the grass and the flocks that feed on it—the tree, and the master of its fruits—the tender charity caught from the happiness of the humblest creature—will be at home in His presence who hath pronounced himself the 'God of Love.'

"The studies, therefore, which we pursue as the means of intellectual delight, or the instruments of acquiring wealth and honor among men, are valuable at the close of life only as they have promoted those dispositions which constitute the bliss of an unending existence. Tested by its bearing and results, it transcends all other sciences. The knowledge which it imparts, does not perish with the stroke which disunites the body from its ethereal companion. Whilst its precepts lead to the highest improvement of this state of probation its spirit is congenial with the ineffable reward to which we aspire. It is the preparation for immortality, which should be daily and hourly wrought out amid all the mutations of time."